

Good morning, Chairwoman Stillman, Chairman Fleischmann, and distinguished Senators and Representatives of the Education Committee.

My name is Milly Arciniegas, and I am the president of the Hartford Parent Organization Council (a coalition of 48 PTO's throughout the city of Hartford Public Schools). As I read the title of the proposed bill 6324 (An Act Concerning Teacher Employment Criteria), I said to myself: finally, a glimmer of hope for our children to continue to academically achieve and to terminate the achievement gap once and for all. But as I kept reading, I realized I was sadly mistaken. The proposed bill does not do enough to change the layoff patterns that cause so much damage to our students in Hartford.

You see, here in Hartford we have gone through a massive reform effort, and for three years our children have shown significant gains. Unless we do something to change the way these layoffs occur this year, our children and schools are at risk. This year, we will once again see teachers be bumped by other teachers solely on the basis of their teacher seniority or tenure. We have hung in there for three years and everyone has been working really hard, and now we are respectfully requesting some relief to continue our progress. The Hartford district has attempted to resolve this situation through the binding arbitration process, but the result this week showed us once again that we need leadership from the state level to provide relief on last in, first out layoffs.

To continue this tenure act as written is fiscally irresponsible and just not fair to our children. We no longer can afford to continue this practice to satisfy the adults. We must have the courage to place children first.

We hope you review the following recommendations for proposed bill 6324.

- Student performance matters and should be one of the factors for a teacher to keep his/her tenure.
- The process of terminating a teacher should be shortened. Studies have shown, each year a child is taught by an ineffective teacher; he/she loses two years.
- Teachers should not be allowed to bump other teachers solely on the basis of teacher seniority. Other factors should be considered, most importantly student performance.

In closing,

Parents do not have the luxury to decide which teacher is the most effective to teach their child and could only assume they are all effective. An injustice to one of our children is an injustice to all. We can no longer just accept the status quo. We are relying on this committee to take corrective action so all children in the state of Connecticut have an equal chance to reach educational success.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you.

Milly Arciniegas, President

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